MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE BULLETIN

# Bread Loaf Writers' Conference

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THE BREAD LOAF WRITERS' CONFERENCE

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# Bread Loaf Writers' Conference

## Twelfth Annual Session

August 18 - September 1, 1937

Sponsored by

**MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE**

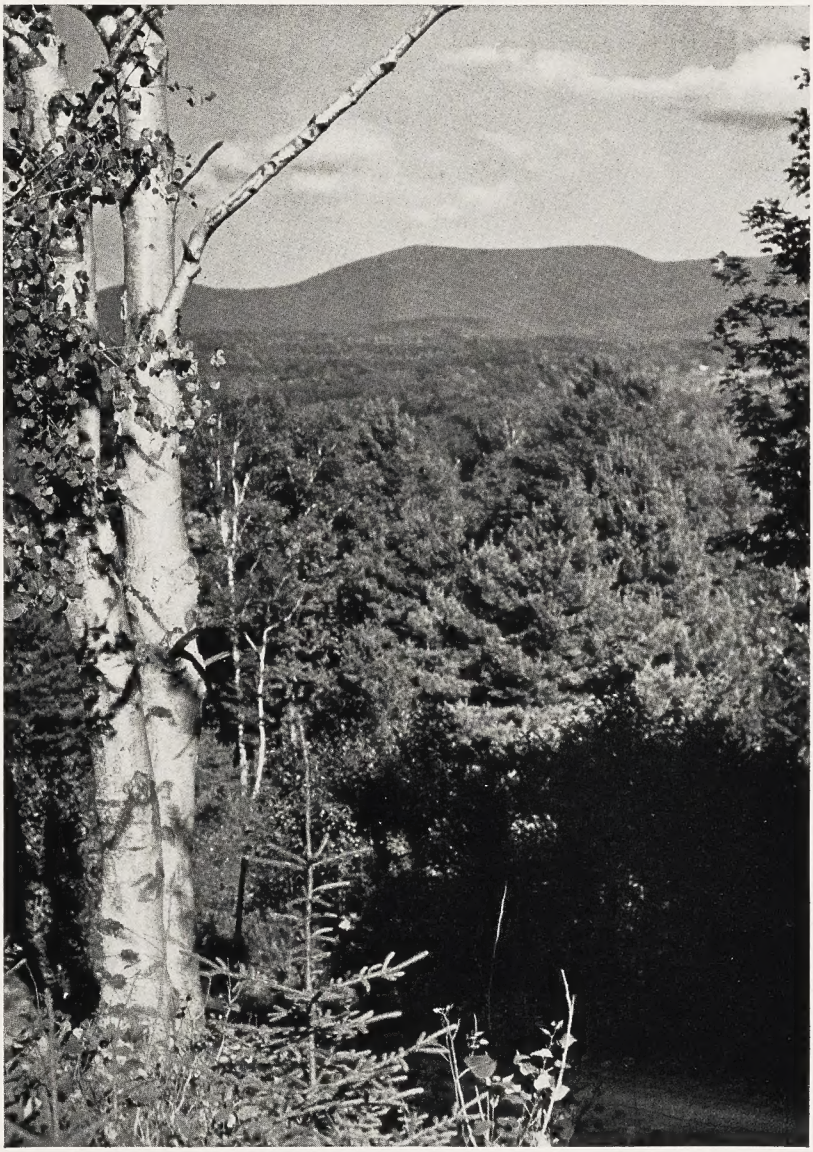
**THEODORE MORRISON**
Director

## PURPOSE

The Bread Loaf Writers' Conference provides for people who wish to make progress as writers an opportunity to obtain in pleasant and stimulating surroundings the advice and criticism of well-known authors, editors, critics, and teachers. The Conference, now in its second decade of service to writers, was inaugurated in the summer of 1926 under the directorship of John Farrar, New York editor and publisher. It enjoyed the sympathy and support of such preëminent American literary figures as Robert Frost and Dorothy Canfield Fisher, and it has continued to attract year by year a staff of widely recognized novelists, editors, poets, critics, and teachers.

The Conference aims primarily to advise its members in regard to definite literary problems, and to help them master the techniques of the main forms of writing. Its staff members are chosen and its program arranged for this purpose. But the Conference seeks in every way it can to be practical. It is well equipped to provide reliable advice about questions of publication, and is glad to bring material which members of the staff think publishable to the notice of appropriate book publishers or magazine editors. To render this service as efficient as possible, the staff regularly includes one or more members who have had wide experience as literary agents or publishers.

Although the Conference aims to be of use mainly to men and women who themselves wish to be active writers, it is also of great



BREAD LOAF MOUNTAIN

value to teachers of composition and students of contemporary American literature who do not necessarily expect to be writers themselves but are interested in the writing of others. The Conference is glad to include among its members a group whose interest is of this kind.

## STAFF FOR 1937

THE main work of the Conference is devoted to the novel, the short story, verse, plays, articles, and criticism. The staff is chosen with these principal lines of effort in mind. But the professional experience of the staff as a whole is so various that its members can deal with a very wide range of literary problems, not limited to the forms of writing just mentioned. The classification below is in no way restrictive, and merely indicates the branch of writing to which in general each staff member will give his main attention.

### Fiction

BERNARD DEVOTO, Editor of *The Saturday Review of Literature;* author of novels, short stories, articles; contributor of the Easy Chair department to *Harper's;* author of *Mark Twain's America, We Accept with Pleasure,* etc.

EDITH MIRRIELEES, Professor of English, Stanford University; authority on the short story; author of *Writing the Short Story,* etc.

GEORGE STEVENS, Managing Editor, *Saturday Review of Literature.*

HELEN EVERITT, New York literary agent.
(Mrs. Everitt acts as Publication Adviser to the Conference.)

### Plays

PAUL GREEN, eminent southern playwright and teacher; winner of the Pulitzer Prize for his play, *In Abraham's Bosom;* author of many volumes of plays, and of novels and short stories.

### Verse

THEODORE MORRISON, Director of the Conference; formerly an associate editor of the *Atlantic Monthly;* author of *The Serpent in the Cloud; Notes of Death and Life.*

### Articles and Criticism

Gorham B. Munson, lecturer at the New School for Social Research, New York; editor, biographer, teacher; author of critical and biographical studies of Robert Frost and Waldo Frank, and of other books.

## VISITORS

The Conference has always been able to congratulate itself on its distinguished visitors, who come sometimes for a day, sometimes for longer periods, to give general lectures or to hold individual consultations or to take part in open discussions. This year our visitors will include:

Robert Frost.

Archibald MacLeish, winner of the Pulitzer Prize in poetry, and one of the editors of *Fortune.*

James T. Farrell, novelist, author of *Studs Lonigan* and *A World I Never Made.*

Alice Duer Miller, fiction writer.

Elmer Davis, journalist, essayist, fiction writer, reviewer.

John Farrar, publisher, and founder of the Conference.

Raymond Everitt, editorial representative in New York of Little, Brown & Co.

## PROGRAM

The Conference is conducted with much informality and flexibility. The permanent features of the program include lectures on the techniques of the main forms of writing, class discussions of manuscripts by Conference members, evening lectures on contemporary American literature, and individual interviews between staff and Conference members for criticism of manuscript and advice on literary or publishing problems.

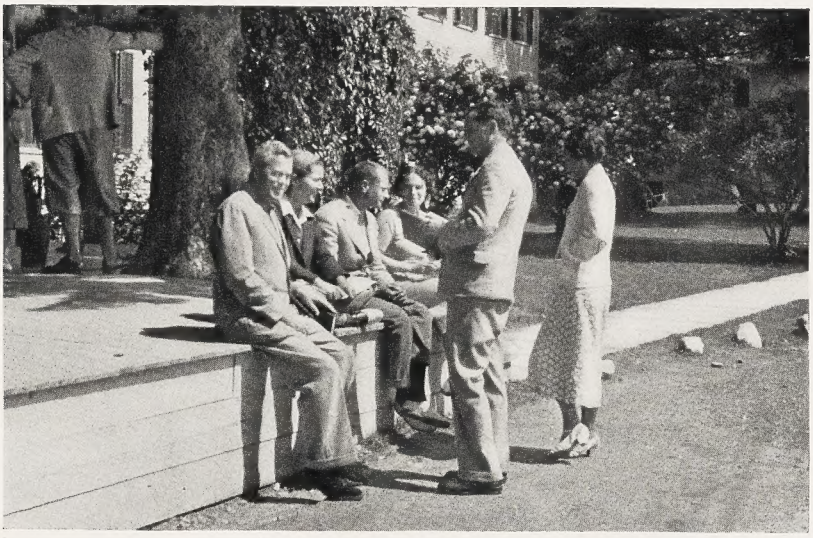
Members of the Conference who submit manuscripts for criticism hand them to the Director at the outset of the session. In general, lectures on technique are given during the first half of the Conference, while staff members are acquainting themselves with the manuscripts which the Director has assigned to them. During the second half of the Conference, the work bears directly on these manuscripts,

which are discussed in classroom sessions or "clinics," led by members of the staff. Lectures on technique and "clinics" occupy the mornings. No regular program is scheduled during the afternoons. Personal interviews for manuscript criticism may be arranged by staff members during afternoon hours, or special discussions and lectures for which other times are not available. But for the most part members of the Conference are free after lunch for exploration of the country, for work, or for discussions on their own part.

During the evenings, a program of general lectures, readings, and discussions will be presented, given by distinguished visitors or by members of the staff. These lectures will provide a series of highly unusual and stimulating views of contemporary American writing by men and women who have themselves won distinction as authors, critics, or editors.

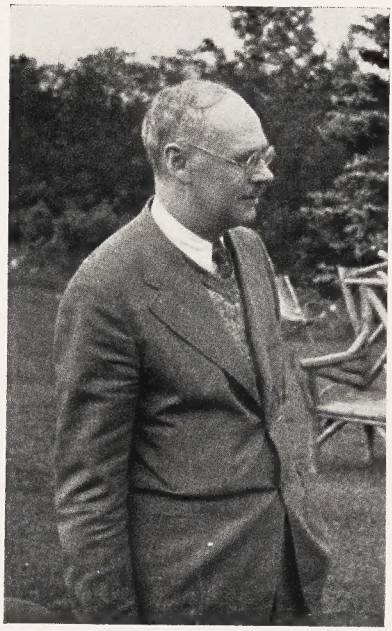
## ADMISSION

THE work of the Conference is planned for men and women who wish to make progress as writers, and for that purpose wish to submit manuscripts to the staff for criticism. The Conference also provides



FRONT PORCH, BREAD LOAF INN, 1936 CONFERENCE

Seated: Robert Hillyer (staff member); Mrs. Rex; Robeson Bailey (fellowship holder); Mrs. Everitt (staff member). Standing: Raymond Everitt (staff member); Miss DeLamater (fellowship holder).



GORHAM MUNSON
(staff member)

JOSEPHINE JOHNSON
(staff member) and
GEORGE MARION O'DONNELL
(fellowship holder) 1936

for people who are not themselves active writers, but who are interested in contemporary American literature or in the teaching of composition, a very unusual opportunity to hear remarkable discussions of current writing by men and women who are leaders in it.

Two classes of membership in the Conference are accordingly offered:

(1) Those who wish to bring manuscripts to Bread Loaf for criticism by the staff should apply for admission as *Contributors.*

(2) Those who do not wish to submit manuscripts should apply for admission as *Auditors.*

### (1) *Contributors*

Contributors are asked to submit examples of their work, published or unpublished, *at the time of application.* The object of asking for these examples is to provide as far as possible that contributing members of the Conference shall be likely to profit by the criticism of the

staff. Those who do not seem likely to profit by staff criticism will be advised not to enroll as *Contributors.*

Admission as a *Contributor* should in no sense be taken as an indication of the sort of criticism which the applicant should expect from staff members after reaching Bread Loaf. Nor should it be taken as a judgment on the merits or promise of the work submitted. It represents only the careful but not infallible opinion of a preliminary manuscript reader that the applicant may reasonably expect to profit as a writer by the instruction, criticism, and associations of Bread Loaf.

No criticism of any manuscript will be given before the Conference begins.

The Conference makes no claim that it can teach anyone to write. It believes that it can make possible a stimulating, friendly, and enjoyable association between a group of men and women who desire to make literary progress and a group of professionals who have already achieved marked success. The Conference tries to be both friendly, helpful, and absolutely honest. The degree to which its members can profit by it will depend upon the extent to which they can profit by candid criticism and stimulating associations.

*FROM A WRITER:*

*I spend my days recommending Bread Loaf. Not only did my first summer help me immediately to publish my* Friends and Fiddlers*—a staff member read the manuscript, and wrote to an editor about it—but I use daily so many of the things I learned in the lectures: Mr. DeVoto's system of cutting; his "Just run it through your typewriter again," meaning rewrite from start to finish when you think it all done; his telling me not to "soar." And the conviction arrived at that to be a writer you have to push out into the open and take knock after knock. The professional attitude—I believe that is the most valuable thing a writer can get at Bread Loaf and I know there is no other writers' school that gives it.*

*Truly I can't express how much Bread Loaf can do for a writer, a beginning one or a launched one.*

CATHERINE DRINKER BOWEN,
*Co-author (with Barbara von Meck) of* Beloved Friend, The Story of Tchaikowsky and Nadejda von Meck *(Book-of-the-Month Club choice for February, 1937).*

### (2) *Auditors*

Auditors may attend all lectures, discussions, "clinics," and other general meetings of the Conference. They may not submit manuscripts for staff criticism; otherwise their privileges are in no way different from those of Contributors.

*FROM A TEACHER:*

*The Bread Loaf Writers' Conference is one of the most valuable opportunities that anyone interested in writing could possibly find. Many instructors in English in colleges or schools want to attend it as observers, without necessarily bringing manuscripts, and for them too it is full of profit and delight. The opportunity of hearing the experience of writers engaged in creative work, of discussing questions that arise in their work, is an inestimable privilege. The fellowship of mind at the Conference is noteworthy and unforgettable. I cannot express too heartily my sense of the worth of being present as an observer.*

Sophie C. Hart,
*Professor of English, Wellesley.*

## HOW TO APPLY FOR ADMISSION

(1) Write for application blanks to Richard L. Brown, Esq., Middlebury, Vermont.

(2) If you desire admission as a *Contributor*, forward at the same time that you return your application blank examples of your published or unpublished work. As much material may be submitted as you feel is necessary to represent fairly the range and quality of your work.

All manuscript must be clearly typed, and will be returned only if accompanied by full postage or clear directions for return by express collect. A full and clear address should be written on all manuscript as well as on all letters. Address all manuscript to Mr. Brown. (Do *not* write Bread Loaf on manuscript submitted in applying for admission.) Some time may pass before manuscript can be returned, and it will therefore be an advantage to keep copies.

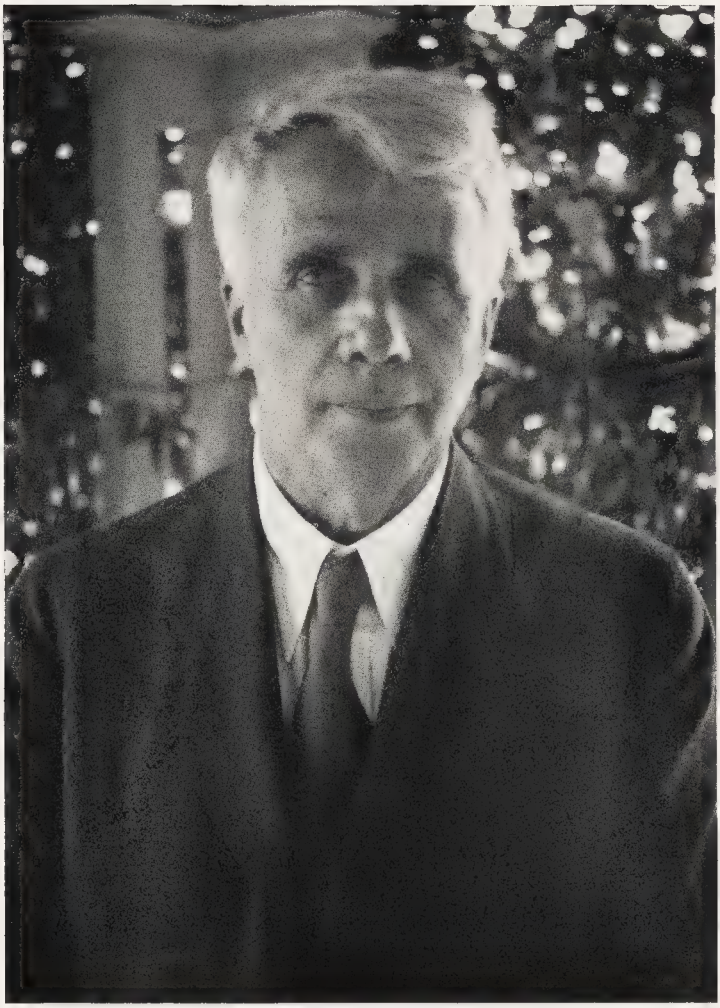
(3) If you desire admission as an Auditor, simply obtain application blanks from Mr. Brown, fill them out, and return them, taking care to indicate that you wish to enroll as an Auditor.

## FELLOWSHIPS

THE Conference offers each year a number of fellowships to writers of marked promise who are nominated and recommended by publishers, magazine editors, well-known authors, or teachers. Ordinarily, fellowship holders have some definite achievement already to their credit, in the form of one or more published books or prominent contributions to magazines. Their presence is an additionally stimulating and enriching influence at the Conference.

During the last three years, fellowships at the Conference have been held by Josephine Johnson (nominated by the *Atlantic Monthly*); George Marion O'Donnell (nominated by John Crowe Ransom and Donald Davidson); Isabel Wilder (nominated by Coward-McCann); Robeson Bailey (nominated by Bernard DeVoto); Shirley Barker (nominated by the Yale University Press); Lauren Gilfillan (nominated by the Viking Press); Anthony Wrynn (nominated by Marianne Moore); and others.

LIBRARY AND LITTLE THEATRE



ROBERT FROST

Photographed by Bernard DeVoto at Nineteen Thirty-five Conference

STAFF AND FELLOWS, 1936

Back row: Richard L. Brown; Anthony Wrynn; George Stevens; Edward L. Crook; Theodore Morrison; Robert Hillyer; Gorham Munson; Robeson Bailey

Front row: George M. O'Donnell; John Mason Brown; Mrs. Bernard DeVoto; Raymond Everitt; Mrs. Everitt; Bernard DeVoto; Eleanor DeLamater; Mrs. Janet Johl; Mrs. Morrison; Hope W. Sykes.

## PRIZES

To reward merit, and to emphasize its desire to aid promising writers, the Conference offers prizes for excellent unpublished work by *Contributors*. They will be cash prizes, not to exceed $75.00 in all, the number of prizes and amount of each to be determined by the staff according to the excellence and variety of material submitted for criticism.

## FEES

(1) For *Contributors:*

The charge for membership in the Conference for *Contributors* is $100.00, plus the charge for a room in the Bread Loaf Inn. The fee of $100.00 includes charges for tuition and board for the duration of the Conference. Rooms may be had at a cost of $8.00 to $42.00 for the full term. Address all correspondence in regard to rooms to Mrs. Pamelia S. Powell, Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vermont. A deposit of $20.00 should be made with her before August 1.

(2) For *Auditors:*

The charge for *Auditors* is $75.00 plus room charges. *Auditors* may enroll for one week at $40.00 plus room charges, but otherwise there will be no deduction for part-time attendance.

## DATES

The Conference begins with the noon meal on registration day, Wednesday, August 18, and concludes with breakfast on Wednesday morning, September 1. Members traveling by train or bus should buy tickets for Middlebury, Vermont. Free transportation from Middlebury to Bread Loaf is provided on August 18, and from Bread Loaf to Middlebury on September 1. Those who bring manuscripts to Bread Loaf should bring them if possible in their hand luggage, so that they may be submitted to the Director on registration day.

## RECREATION AND SURROUNDINGS

Mountain-climbing, horse-back riding, tennis, and other games are available at or immediately about Bread Loaf Inn. Golf courses are available at Middlebury, Brandon, or farther afield; and swimming at Lake Dunmore.

Bread Loaf Inn is a hotel of picturesque history and exceptional situation. It stands in the midst of one of the most magnificent forest tracts in the Eastern states. It is well up in the Green Mountains, which overlook the Champlain Valley. The nearest community, a few miles down the road, is the village of Ripton, where old-fashioned square dancing thrives with great vitality and annually attracts visitors from Bread Loaf.

# BREAD LOAF SCHOOL OF ENGLISH

## CONDUCTED BY MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE

H. G. OWEN, Director and Dean JUNE 30 — AUGUST 13, 1937

The School of English offers graduate courses in the art of teaching, creative writing, English and American Literature, and play production. The work is planned for those seeking the M. A. degree and for high school teachers of English.

For bulletins and information address PROF. H. G. OWEN, Middlebury, Vermont